

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-11, 15, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Summary of Response to Office Action

The Office Action dated May 7, 2003, has been reviewed and the comments of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office have been considered. The above amendments to the claims and the following remarks are respectfully submitted to place the application in condition for allowance, or at least in better form for appeal. By this Amendment, Applicant proposes amending claims 1, 5, and 10, and canceling claims 4 and 9 without prejudice or disclaimer in order to clarify the claimed invention and to expedite the prosecution of this Application. Accordingly, if the proposed amendments are entered, claims 1-3, 5-8, 10, 11, 15, and 16 would be currently pending in this Application.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10, 11, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has made this Office Action final without performing an art examination. The Examiner also states that the previous art examination was based on the Examiner's best interpretation of the claims in light of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. However, in the previous Office Action (Paper No. 6), there was no rejection of claim 1 under § 112. The Office Action now rejects claim 1 under § 112, even though the feature of the elements in the second connection configuration "being connected to power lines of said internal circuits associated therewith and being isolated from signal wires other than said inter-circuit signal wire," which the Office Action asserts is vague, was present in claim 1 at the time of the previous examination.

Further, the Office Action on page 2, paragraph 1 suggests that the feature of "a plurality of active elements in a second connection configuration including elements of an identical or similar structure to an active element in a first connection configuration connected to said inter-circuit signal wire" recited in claim 1 is vague. However, this feature also was present when the Application was previously examined. The response to the previous non-final Office Action, amended this feature of claim 1 by replacing "another" with "a second" in order to clarify the claimed invention. Consequently, Applicant respectfully submits that the scope of this feature of claim 1 has not changed.

Also, the previous rejection of claim 5 under § 112 was made because it was allegedly unclear if "said active element" in line 20 referred to the first or second connection

configuration. In the Amendment dated January 30, 2003, Applicant amended claim 5 so that it recites "said active element in said second connection configuration." This amendment was made to clarify the claimed invention and did not change the scope of the subject matter claimed. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that an additional art examination could and should have been performed based on the previous understanding of the invention.

MPEP § 706.07 states that an applicant is entitled to a full and fair hearing, and that a clear issue between Applicant and Examiner should be developed. Thus, an examination based on the art should have been performed based on the Examiner's understanding of the invention. Accordingly, the final Office Action should be withdrawn and Applicant respectfully requests a new Office Action incorporating an examination based on the art.

The following are remarks related to the presently proposed amendments to the claims, which illustrate that all of the pending claims are allowable. Amended independent claims 1 and 5 recite combinations of features, each including gates of either an active element (claim 5) or a plurality of active elements (claim 1) in the second connection configuration being connected only to power lines of said internal circuits associated therewith. Support for this feature is provided in the originally filed Specification, for example, at page 37, lines 21-26, and page 38, lines 1-13. Figs. 1A and 1B show that the gates of elements in a second connection configuration 21-28 are connected only to power lines 8A,8B,9A,9B, while the gates of active elements 12A,12B in the first connection configuration are connected to the signal lines SA,SB or the inter-circuit signal wire 12. In addition, Figs. 2A and 2B show that the gates of elements in the second connection configuration 25,27 are connected to power lines 8B,9B, while the gates of active elements 12A,12B in the first connection configuration are connected to the signal lines SA,SB or the inter-circuit signal wire 12. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully

submits that a person having ordinary skill in the art reading claims 1 and 5 in light of the Specification would understand which elements are associated with either the first or second connection configuration.

Furthermore, claims 1 and 5 are proposed to be amended to recite that “the inter-circuit signal wire is not directly connected to said external signal input/output circuits.” Support for this feature is provided in the originally filed Specification, for example, in Figs. 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B. These Figures show that the inter-circuit signal wire 12 connects the internal active elements 12A, 12B of the first connection configuration of internal circuits 4A, 4B. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that amended claims 1 and 5 are compliant with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Therefore the rejection of claims 1 and 5 under § 112 should be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3, 6-8, 10, 11, 15, and 16, which depend ultimately from one of either allowable claims 1 or 5, are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 and 5, as well as for reciting additional features. Therefore, with no other rejections outstanding, claims 1-3, 5-8, 10, 11, 15, and 16 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that entry of this amendment is appropriate insofar as it places the Application in condition for allowance, or at least places the Application in better condition for appeal. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the Application and timely allowance of pending claims 1-3, 5-8, 10, 11, 15 and 16. Applicant invites the Examiner to contact Applicant's undersigned representative if there are any issues that can be resolved via telephone conference.

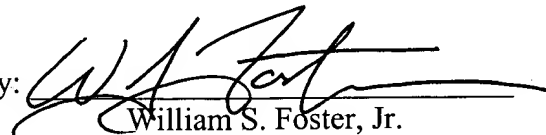
EXCEPT for issue fees payable under 37 C.F.R. §1.18, the Commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the entire pendency of this application including fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0310. This paragraph is intended to be a **CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME** in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a)(3).

Respectfully submitted,

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